Assessing Military Intervention and Democratization:
Supportive Versus Oppositional Military Interventions

Abstract

 Democratization is a common foreign policy goal for established democratic states and has been
promoted by a variety of tools from sanctions to military force.  Research, to data has been
ambiguous with regards to the success of military intervention and democratization.  Most
studies agree change occurs, although the nature of the change is debatable. This study sifts the
post-World War II military interventions to assess whether the regime change post intervention
is democratic.  The data suggest democratically intended military interventions do not result in
democratization. However, interventions that oppose the existing political elites do yield positive
results in democratization.

Kay Words: Military Intervention, Democratization, IMI, Polity

**Introduction**

In 2002, the Bush Administration advanced the *Middle East Partnership Initiative* (MEPI) as

part of its counterterrorist strategy following the 9/11 attacks, which advocates democracy

promotion as an antidote to persistent political violence. The MEPI is not unique as it reflects a

long-standing tendency among established democracies to advocate democracy promotion as a

cure-all for political ailments in target countries. Still, like most outcomes of war little is truly

understood about the impact of military intervention on the constitutional regime of the target

state. We know that democratic states favor democracy promotion.[1] However, we must

distinguish the intent from the outcome in order to assess the relative utility of military force as a

foreign policy tool to promote democracy. Does military intervention yield progress in

democratization? Moreover, does military intervention, for the purpose of democratization, yield

an impact on regime change that is distinct from other types of military intervention? Answers to

these questions have yielded inconsistent results. At best, we can ascertain that military

intervention does impact the polity of the targeted state.[2] However, we do not have a clear

understanding of the actual changes in the target state's regime. Many studies indicate a positive

relationship between military intervention and democratization.[3] Nevertheless, other studies

suggest no relationship between military intervention and democratic regime change.[4]

There are two persistent problems in evaluating aggressive democracy promotion. First,

there is an issue as to how the data is interpreted with regard to changes in a target country's

political system. Most studies use the Polity index to measure regime characteristics and interpret

any progressive movement on the polity scale as democratization.[5] In the strictest sense, this

claim is accurate.[6] However, such an interpretation passes over qualitative factors of polity

scores in the lower ranges as they approach zero (the range referred to as anocracy). As a result,

there is a tendency in the scholarship to claim democratization in a target state, when in reality the state has weakened, become less consolidated or institutionally inconsistent.[7]

Second, previous studies do not evaluate the political impact of democratic military interventions against military intervention for other, more general purposes. Regime change is a likely outcome of war, particularly for the losing side.[8] If the outcome of aggressive democracy promotion is no different than the outcome of general military intervention we must question the general utility of military intervention as a specific tool for democracy promotion, particularly if the outcome is negative. Regime change may be a product of military interventions, but the specific product of the regime change may be beyond the control of the intervening state.

This study proceeds in two parts. First is a review of previous work on aggressive democracy promotion to highlight the logic and history of democracy promotion as a foreign policy goal among established democracies. The review of the literature critiques problems associated with data interpretation especially as it relates to the Polity data. The second part of this study provides an empirical examination of aggressive democracy promotion. The goal is to provide a rigorous evaluation of the impact of military intervention on changes in the regimes of target states. The study closes with an assessment aggressive democracy promotion as a foreign policy tool to determine if it has been oversold as a foreign policy option.

**Aggressive Democracy Promotion**

The "Liberal Grand Strategy" of promoting democracy, as part and parcel of a nation's foreign policy, is often treated as a uniquely American endeavor. Without a doubt U.S. rhetoric has led the charge into democratization efforts over the past century, holding up post-war democratization in Japan and Germany as shining examples. Moreover, the U.S. has committed

itself to helping new democracies consolidate power and to "aid democratic transitions".[9] However, the U.S. is not alone in this effort. First, forced regime change (democratic or otherwise) is a common behavior among great powers throughout history.[10] States use regime change as a measure of their ideology's success[11], and regime change is understood as a best practice to ensure compliance with the interests of the dominant state.[12] Second, U.S. efforts are supplemented with actions by other actors in the international system when it comes to force democratic regime change. The United Nations has adopted democracy promotion as a strategic goal within the context of peacekeeping missions and European powers invested in creating democratic institutions as they made plans to relinquish colonial possessions.

For example, Great Britain saw democratization as an essential part of decolonization. This position is best illustrated by John Lugard (1994), who in the late 19th Century argued that the eventual self-governance for Africans was best advanced by establishing democracies modeled on the European parliamentary style of government.[13] France's colonization attempts in Africa reflect a similar goal. France originally had no intent to sever ties with its African colonial acquisitions; it was simply going to make them French. The assimilation plan was quickly scrapped for association, which involved establishing French style democracy across its African holdings.[14] In this light, the U.S. liberal grand strategy is clearly not a new idea, or even a uniquely American concept. The behavior of forced regime change, and aggressive democracy promotion are ingrained into the world order.

Yet, all this work by states and institutions to promote democracy returns us to the question of 'why?' Why would states wantonly spend their military resources and political capital in the pursuit of democracy in other states? The preoccupation with spreading democracy reflects a larger liberal view on how to create a stable world order.[15] United States policy to

pursue a liberal peace has remained constant since Woodrow Wilson. The general belief being that if countries are more democratic, it will be easier to establish advantageous trade and economic policies, and maintain stable diplomatic relations.[16] In his 1994 State of the Union address, then President Bill Clinton reaffirms, "The best strategy to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere."[17] This sentiment was echoed by national security advisor Anthony Lake (1994), who argued that advancing democracies, "[S]erves our interests". The promotion of democracy is viewed as a "compelling national interest", making it a central security interest for U.S. policy makers.[18]

Underneath the goal of democracy promotion is the assumption that democracy can be generated from an external source. However, there is little empirical support for this assertion. Most studies on regime change suggest it is driven by internal factors virtually independent of external forces.[19] Moreover, Samuel Huntington (1984) suggests that democratization must flow from internal forces in order for any semblance of real democracy to be retained over time.[20] Inarguably, there are numerous factors influencing the probability of successful democratization. These factors run the gamut from economic (per capita income, export dependent economy) to political (history of democracy), to cultural (western, liberal values, ethnic homogeneity) to name a few.[21] A large volume of research has shown these internal factors affect the ability of states to democratize successfully. Yet most targets of external democratic interventions contain negative records on these factors, meaning the probability of successful democratization is low.[22] Within the small body of democratization literature which attempts to assess external factors of democratization, the general consensus is "how little can be done" by external actors.[23]

Despite the general consensus that democratization is an internal process, recent studies on Aggressive Democracy Promotion (ADP) insist the opposite is true, that outside actors can

affect regime change in their target states. Military interventions remove roadblocks on the path

of a state's internal shift towards democracy. Interventions can instigate regime change by

removing dictators from power or breaking up old elite structures.[24] Additionally, the promise of

democracy juxtaposed to the more recent bad memories of dictatorship is a sufficient force to

stabilize a new democratic regime installed by an outside actor.[25] The logical merit of external

intervention notwithstanding, the observed relationship between democracy and external intervention is

murky. It is this particular issue that we turn our attention to now.


**Evaluating the ADP Research Program**

The ambiguity of findings on aggressive democracy promotion is a product of the general lack of

scholarly research on the consequences of war overall. Although the 'causes of war' and war

itself have been extensively studied, little has been made of its aftermath.  Many reasons exist for

this lack of scholarship.  First, the aftermath of war has often been seen as less important than the

cause or conduct of war.  Second, the consequences of war provide such a vast terrain;

economic, political, and social, that it is overwhelming to try and narrow any one aspect to

attempt a study on the effects.[26] In toll, there is a dearth of scholarly analysis, and there are

relatively few theories to guide research.

However, the dearth of analysis does not mean there is none. In one exemplar study

William Thompson (1993) suggests that losers in war were more likely to experience violent

regime change. This finding supports an argument for the use of aggressive democracy

promotion. If war is capable of producing regime change, then the victor state has the ability to

affect the replacement regime. Democratization can be accomplished by encouraging "free and

fair elections" in the post-intervention phase.[27] Democratic regime change can also be

accomplished by traditional nation building activities, such as building civil society and

institutions.[28] Several recent studies report findings that support the potential to generate democracy as part of a military intervention.  For example, Meernik (1996) compares rates of democratization in states not targeted for military intervention to states targeted for military intervention and found that the targeted states are more likely to experience democratic growth. Hermann and Kegley find when regime change occurs after a military intervention it is more likely to produce liberalization within the political regime.[29]

Although these studies indicate the promise of military intervention to promote democratization they all suffer from various flaws in their analysis. First, several studies define military intervention broadly to include applications of force like humanitarian missions.[30] Failure to separate interventions intent on affecting the target regime versus humanitarian missions and other such actions, "misses the point.".[31] Humanitarian missions are fundamentally different in nature as they are intended to provide relief and comfort to the civilian population. Including humanitarian missions in a study on forced regime change mistakenly broadens the phenomena to include many irrelevant cases.

A second problem stems from a common misreading of the measures for democracy. Extant research relies on the Polity IVd scale on the democratic tendencies in a state. Studies showing a positive outcome for aggressive democracy promotion tend to label any movement along the polity scale in a positive direction as "liberalizing", thereby constituting evidence of democratization.  Attempts to define liberalization and democratization as the same phenomenon are inaccurate.  The two processes often occur in tandem, however they are separate and distinct and either can occur without the other.  Liberalization refers to the expanding of rights to individuals or groups.  Democratization refers to the process of creating an institutionalized

system of government.[32] Autocratic states can experience "liberalization" by allowing women to vote (in the not free and fair elections) yet this does not make them more democratic.

The Polity dataset specifically measures only institutional democracy and does not attempt to capture aspects of liberalization. Polity IVd assesses institutional democracy and autocracy on a scale of -10 (strong autocratic) to +10 (strong democratic). Democratic and autocratic features are measured separately and the two scores are summed to give the final polity score.[33] Strong autocratic states score from -10 to -6 on the combined polity scale. Anocracies, defined as politically weak central governments or as regimes that mix democratic with autocratic features, score from -5 to +5 on the combined polity scale. States are considered democratic if they score +6 to +10 on the polity scale.[34] For a state to serve as an example of democratization its polity score would need to would have to cross the threshold from autocracy or anocracy to democracy. In reference to the polity score, a state would need to move from a score of less than +5 to a score equal to or greater than +6 on the combined scale. Movement within the negative range does not indicate democratization, or even liberalization. It is merely indicates weakening and destabilization of the authoritarian or anocratic regime.

Meanwhile, the intent of aggressive democracy promotion is to generate healthy, stable democratic states which can become allies to the democratic powers. Action that destabilizes a state decrease the chance democracy will continue post intervention and provide a reliable new addition to the liberal world order. More precisely, new democracies are "[M]ore aggressive and war prone.".[35] Recently democratized states experience a "rocky transitional period" wherein the polity is weakened and mixes volatility with authoritarian elite politics. These findings correlate to studies by Gates (2004) and Enterline and Greig (2008), which concluded aggressive democracy promotion is politically destabilizing.

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One additional hole in the literature is a general failure to compare the impact of military intervention with the intent to promote democracy (aggressive democracy promotion or ADP) to military intervention for other purposes (general military intervention or GMI hereafter). As stated above, losers in war are likely to experience some degree of regime change.[36] By extension, the victorious state can ultimately shape the nature of the replacement regime in order to elevate democratic institutions and practices, if they so choose. In other words, the intent of the intervention matters to the nature of the replacement regime. However, this particular finding has not been evaluated. If ADP yields democratization while GMI produces no specific changes to the polity then ADP is a successful foreign policy tool. However, if the polity shift from ADP is not significantly different from regime shifts caused by GMI it undercuts the utility of military interventions for the specific purposes of democratization. This study attempts to address this missing piece of the literature.

**Analyzing Aggressive Democracy Promotion**

There are numerous factors which can affect a state's political regime. However, the goal of this study is to isolate the effects of military interventions on democratization. To that end, we explore the effects of military interventions for two outcomes: The effect of military intervention on the democratic shift of a polity, and variation between aggressive democracy promotion and general military intervention on the target state. If aggressive democracy promotion is a viable foreign policy approach target states should demonstrate positive changes in their polity as a result of the military intervention, and interventions for specific purposes of democratization should be a significant contributor to the positive shift over general military intervention.

Data on military interventions is taken from the International Military Intervention (IMI) Dataset.[37] The IMI provides the most accurate and exhaustive list of international uses of

military force. The dataset codes multiple variables in relation to the individual interventions, such as type of mission (e.g. humanitarian, border dispute). The IMI defines military intervention as "the movement of regular troops or forces (airborne, sea borne, shelling, etc.) of one country into the territory or territorial waters of another country, or forceful military action by troops already stationed by one country inside another, in the context of some political issue or dispute.".[38] The IMI excludes actions taken by covert forces, and is effectively broad enough to accurately reflect the limited military actions of the post World War II period.

For purposes of this study observations are restricted to interventions that include conventional military forces that involve traditional (declared) wars and police actions. Clandestine missions and humanitarian interventions are excluded. Conventional military missions, regardless of intent, are fundamentally different from covert operations. Traditional military forces are visible and apparent to actors in the arena where they operate, and use overt force to advance their goals and objectives. Covert operations on the other hand are, by definition, not visible actors. Often covert operations involve arming insurgents or rebels within a state to carry out military actions. As such, covert military action is fundamentally different. At the same time, humanitarian missions provide aid and comfort to civilians, and almost always restrict forces from engaging in conflict, making them fundamentally distinct from traditional military action and thereby ineligible for this study.

Military interventions for purposes of democracy promotion are defined as any intervention where the initiator is a consolidated democracy. A consolidated democracy is defined as any state with a Polity score of +6 or greater along the Polity IVd scale.[39] To isolate cases where the intervention is for purposes of democratization we searched the public record on each case for public statements that indicate the intent to democratize the target state as a

primary strategic goal. Public statements were culled from the New York Times Archives, BBC, Foreign Relations Documents of the United States (FRUS), and the United Nations online Document Archive. These data are coded as a dummy variable (DEMINT), where an interventions for purposes of democracy promotion are coded as one (1), and general military interventions are coded as zero (0).[40]

Democracy is measured using the Polity IVd dataset.[41] The core measurements of the Polity index focus on the openness of competition for executive recruitment, constraints placed on the chief executive, and competitiveness of political participation. The polity variable measures a state's democratic features (+1 to +10) and autocratic features (-1 to -10) and then sums these separate scales to provide the Polity "Score" (-10 to 10). To measure the effects of military intervention on the polity of a target state, we coded the Polity score for the target state 1-year prior to the start date of the intervention and 1-year after the end of the intervention, and five years post-intervention.[42]

One reason for ambiguity in previous research on military intervention relates to the inconsistent use of the democracy measure (Polity IIId or Polity IVd in most cases). In twelve previous studies, on military based democracy promotion from 1994 to 2008, reviewed for this analysis we observe the Polity index used in ten. In those ten studies, only two use a consistent formulation of the Polity variable, where the dependent variable measures liberalization as (One-Year post intervention score – One-year prior to intervention), and democratization as a dichotomous variable where 1 is when a target state moves above +6 on the polity scale and stays above +6 for a three year period, all other cases below +6 are 0.[43] The remaining eight studies all use the Polity index in different ways. For example, Gleditsch et al (2004) measures regime change as a 2-point shift in the polity score, Peceny (1999) as movement above +6 on the

Democracy scale only (not the full index), Meernik (1996) uses three ordered categories (negative change, no change, or positive change), Gates and Strand (2004) use a significant change dummy variable, Hermann and Kegley (1996) as the (polity index score x concentration) and (1998) as any movement up or down the polity scale. The range of different formulations of the dependent variable speaks to a core issue in studies of this nature: what constitutes regime change (generally) and democratization (specifically)? The general conclusion is to define a degree of "significant" change based on fluctuation in the target state's Polity score, and to assess if the change observed relates to the treatment of "military intervention." All efforts in this regard show a general misunderstanding of the Polity index.

The aggregate Polity scores should not be treated, strictly speaking, as interval level data.[44] There is actually wide variation between states clustered in the higher and lower ranges of the polity scale (+6 to +10, and -6 to -10 respectively). The middle of the polity scale (-5 to +5) captures characteristics of an *anocratic* political regime, or a semi-democracy (defined by a mixture of democratic and autocratic traits).[45] It is best to deal with these problems by either disaggregating the polity scale to correct the bias in the variable or by grouping states based on the autocracy, anocracy, democracy categories. The latter method is a better solution when the polity scale is the dependent variable (as is the case in this study), the former solution is best when polity is an independent variable.[46]

To incorporate "shifts" in a state's polity each state is coded as an autocracy (-1), a democracy (+1) or an anocracy (0) in the year prior to the military intervention and again in the first and fifth year post-intervention. The score for the year prior to the intervention is subtracted from the year post and five year post-intervention. A positive polity shift is a condition where a state scores a +1 or more in the change from pre-intervention to post-intervention. Therefore, a

shift from autocracy to anocracy, anocracy to democracy, or autocracy to democracy would register as a positive polity shift. Negative polity shifts are reversed, with a -1 or more difference in the pre and post-intervention polity score. So any state that moves from democracy to anocracy, anocracy to autocracy, or democracy to autocracy will register as a negative polity shift. Positive shifts in the polity score are coded as 1, and negative shifts are coded as -1, no shift is coded as 0.[47]

Control variables for this study include several concepts related to: historical-political contexts of the target state (previous polity condition, colonial history, democratic history, and instances and degrees of sate failure), direction of support in the military intervention, and finally population and gross domestic product (GDP). The previous polity category is the one-year pre-intervention polity category (democracy, anocracy, or autocracy). The previous polity category variable assumes that a target state's present is shaped (to some degree) by its past. The outside military action is an intervening event that may provide only modest changes to a target state's polit. The polity of the country may be conditioned more by habit than by intervention.

The history of colonization variable is measured as a target state with any colonial history were recorded as "1", while target states without a colonial history were recorded as "0". The history of past colonization often results in a future where the previous colonial power is inclined to interfere in the politics and government of the state, even to the point of continuing to push for democratization in that state.[48]

Previous research suggests that democratic history, more than any other variable, is a strong and positive predictor of democratic transition.[49] There is a certain logical limit to the importance of democratic history for a target state. We cannot assume a democratic history that may be hundreds of years removed from the era under study would have any direct relationship

to democratic transitions in the Post-World War II era. Therefore, to include a democratic history variable that is relevant to the time period under analysis we constructed a dummy variable where "1" indicates any target state with a history of stable democracy (+6 on the polity scale) at any time since the beginning of World War II (1936), but prior to the military intervention. Any state that did not demonstrate a history of stable democracy since the beginning of World War II is labeled as "0".

A final political context variable relates to state failure. State failure serves both as a pretext for military intervention, and clears away political barriers from the previous regime that may prevent democratic political institutions and practices from establishing themselves. Thus, state failure is likely to correspond to regime change. However, this study does not make any *a priori* predictions on the direction of the relationship between state failure and regime change. State failure will lead to changes to a state's polity. However, we cannot assert with any certainty that the shift will be positive or negative as both outcomes are likely. To measure state failure we used the PITF-State Failure Problem Set: Internal Wars and Failures of Governance (1955-2006), which measures four distinct types of state failures.[50] The particular variable of interest is the Failure of State Authority scale (MAGFAIL), which measures state failure on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 as adverse regime change with no weakening of state institutions, 2 failure of state authority in limited part(s) of the country, 3 failure of state authority in substantial parts of the country, and 4 complete collapse (or near total failure) of state authority. We added in zero to indicate a condition of no state failure in the year of the military intervention.[51]

Additional control variables attempt to capture important elements of the social context related to the target state. One such variable indicates the direction of the intervention within the target state. The IMI dataset codes a complex variable measuring the direction of an intervention

within the target state. This variable includes support or opposition of the target state's current regime, support for or opposition to rebel forces and support or opposition for a challenging group. We collapsed this variable into a dummy variable indicating either support (1) or opposition (0) to the government in power in the target state. Interventions can remove barriers to democratization within a state by removing resisting elites from power. Therefore, this variable controls for whether the elites were supported by the intervention or if the elites were the target. If the military intervention opposes the current regime, we contend it will positively impact the democratic trajectory of the target state. If the military intervention supports the current regime, then it will negatively impact the democratic trajectory of the target state. Finally, we included the GDP of the target state and population of the target state as final control variables.

**Analysis of Aggressive Democracy Promotion**

Democratization, it is assumed, is a common foreign policy goal among established democratic states. However, military intervention for purposes of democracy promotion is not the most prominent form of military intervention launched by democratic aggressor states. Since World War II Aggressive Democracy Promotion clearly has periods of popularity (See Figure 1). In the Post-World War II era, aggressive democracy promotion peaks in the late 1940s and early 1950s, rebounds in the 1960s, and again in the late 1980s to the late 1990s. The 1970s to mid-1980s appears to be the nadir of ADP in practice. In comparison with general military interventions (e.g. border disputes, humanitarian interventions, etc.) ADP is significantly less common as a type of military intervention. For example, during the Post-World War II era aggressive democracy promotion accounts for 34 percent of all military interventions. More to the point, the

proportion of ADP to all military intervention has declined in the Post-Cold War era (after 1991)

accounting for only 23 percent of military interventions (See Figure 2). Hence, democracy

promotion is a common foreign policy *goal* among established democracies, but it is not widely

pursued via military means. The issue, though, is not how widely ADP is used, but when it is

used how well does it perform?

{Figure 1 about here}

{Figure 2 about here}

Generally speaking, aggressive democracy promotion does not appear to have much of a

discernable impact on the polity of the target state. Looking at ADP target states by its one-year

pre-intervention category and its one-year and five-year post-intervention category we observe

very subtle changes in the number of democratic, anocratic and autocratic states in the first post-

intervention measure, and only slightly more pronounced changes in the five-year post-

intervention observation (See Table 1). More specifically, 80 percent of ADP target states

experience no change in their polity category in the one-year post intervention, and 72 percent

show no change in the five-year post-intervention observation (see Table 1). Meanwhile, only 11

percent of target states register a positive shift in their polity category in the one-year post-

intervention and 9 percent experience a negative shift in their polity category. The numbers for

positive polity changes are more pronounced in the five-year observation point where 17 percent

of target states experience a positive shift in their polity category, and 11 percent experience a

negative shift in their polity category. Taken together, the data suggest aggressive democracy

promotion, at best, has a delayed democratization benefit to the target state. Such a finding is,

however, dubious as many other intervening factors may account for the 5-year post-intervention

shift.

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{Table 1 about here}

To illustrate the point more graphically consider the same categorical analysis when we shift attention to General Military Intervention (GMI) (see Table 2). The 1-year pre-intervention scores are fairly stable to the 1-year post-intervention categories with the exception of autocratic states. We see a pronounced drop in the overall number of autocracies one-year following a military intervention with nearly a 30 percent drop in the number of autocracies from one period to the next. The 5-year post intervention scores are more difficult to discern based on the raw data as the number of missing cases, about 18 percent, obscures any conclusions. Looking at the data based on percent changes we observe that the number of states experiencing no change in their polity category (1-year and 5-year) post-intervention is nearly identical (78 and 77 percent respectively). Meanwhile the number of states experiencing positive change is more pronounced for GMI target states, particularly in the 1-year post-intervention point (16 percent). More noteworthy is that the number of GMI target states experiencing negative shifts in their polity category is lower than that of states experiencing ADP military interventions.

{Table 2 about here}

In sum, military interventions do have a subtle impact on the target state. In more than 75 percent of all cases, the target state experiences no change to its polity. About twenty-two percent of states experience some form of change to their polity following military intervention (whether it be ADP or GMI). The positive change to a target state's polity is about the same for either form of military intervention (14 and 15 percent respectively). Meanwhile, the negative change to a target state's polity is slightly better for GMI than ADP (8 and 10 percent respectively). Therefore, the states that experience change in their polity following a military

intervention are slightly better off with GMI than ADP by virtue of being better positioned to avoid negative shifts to their polity in the post-intervention period.

The analysis to this point is only a sketch. To more rigorously test the relationship we employ an ordered probit analysis on all cases (423 for the 1-year post-intervention, and 406 for the 5-year post-intervention) (see Table 3). The main explanatory variable (Democratic Intervention) does not perform well. The direction of the variable is positive, as predicted, to suggest that military interventions for purposes of democracy promotion (ADP) are positively correlated to changes in a target state's polity. However, the variable is not significant for either the 1-year or 5-year post-intervention models. We cannot reject the null hypothesis in this analysis. Moreover, the data here suggests other factors matter more to changes in a target state's polity.

{Table 3 about here}


Support for the government is both negative and highly significant for both the 1-year and 5-year post-intervention periods. Overall the variable performs as predicted. Military interventions that do not support the present government (i.e. oppose the government in power) result in positive changes to a target state's polity. It stands to reason that oppositional military interventions would likely carry with them an implicit democratization charge, especially since the initiating state in this analysis is an established democracy. Hence, there is a probability that the support variable may be an intervening variable between democratic intervention and democratization. To assess this possibility we conducted two additional assessments on the data. First is a Person's Correlation Coefficient, which does not indicate any significant level of correlation between democratic intervention and support for the government (.2039). Second, we

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conduct separate analyses using only democratic intervention and support for the government in each model, there is no change to the direction or significance of either variable as currently reported in Table 3 (models are not reported here).

The findings regarding support for the government and the target state's polity raises some intriguing issues in this study. The data seem to suggest that what matters to the democratizing potential of a target state is that military interventions that remove, or weaken, the established political elite to allow a different political regime to come together. The intervention does not have to have a democratizing intent to have this effect; just a goal to eliminate the current regime and oppose the established elite structures. In the wake of the intervention, positive changes are observed in the polity of the target state (shift from autocracy to anocracy, anocracy to democracy, or autocracy to democracy). At the same time, if a military intervention is directed at stabilizing the existing political regime, and maintaining the existing elite structures, the intervention will militate against democratic potential within the state. In one sense, external forces do have the potential to shape the internal political systems of target states. However, the relationship between ADP and democratization may be mis-specified. Rather than assume military interventions with democratic intent matters to promoting democracy we assert that military interventions opposed to the existing political regime matters. It is a hypothesis that deserves more scrutiny.

Turning attention to the historical-political context variables, the data indicate that the previous polity of the target state and democratic history of the target state are significant predictors of polity change post-intervention. Meanwhile, history of colonization, magnitude of state failure, population and GDP are not significant.

The findings on previous polity warrant deeper treatment. The assertion that the polity of the country may be conditioned more by habit than by intervention is *not* supported by the evidence. The previous polity variable is negative to suggest that the previous political condition of the target state is inversely related to change in the political system in the 1-year and 5-year post-intervention periods. The data suggest there is a clear break between the polity of a target state pre and post-intervention, and the break results in a change moving in the opposite direction of the state's previous political condition. Hence, states do experience positive changes to their polity post-military intervention, but states also experience negative changes to their polity following an intervention. Where a state stood prior to an intervention is a good predictor of where is will stand after.

Democratic history performs as expected, positive and significant. This finding is consistent with past research to suggest that positive change to a state's polity is related a past experience with democracy. Meanwhile, history of colonization is not significant in either model. Magnitude of state failure, population, and gross domestic product are all insignificant predictors of polity change.

In sum this study suggests that democratically intended military interventions do not perform well in producing the intended change in the target state's polity. However, military interventions direct against the established government and political elite do produce positive changes to the polity of the target state. Moreover, the previous polity of the target state does offer information on the direction of change the target state is likely to experience post-intervention. Taken together, military interventions that oppose governments in autocratic political systems may yield positive shifts in the target state's polity, particularly if the target country has a democratic history. The change may be a shift from autocracy to anocracy,

anocracy to democracy, or autocracy to democracy. However, military intervention for the sake of democratization will yield no discernable result.

**Conclusions**

This study set out to evaluate the merit of military intervention as a foreign policy tool to promote democracy in targets states. Since the 19th century established democracies, and international organizations, have actively promoted democracy as a common foreign policy goal. The practice relates to the "Liberal Grand Strategy" idea that democratization will ultimately result in an international system populated with stable and peaceful democratic states. Advancing democratic interests has led some states to employ military force in order to achieve their stated foreign policy goals. The question we are confronted with is, 'how well does military intervention work as a tool for democracy promotion?' The literature on Democratization is fairly clear that it is largely an internal process. At the same time, a separate s body of research suggests external intervention is an important catalyst to the democratization process by removing certain barriers inside a state, thereby allowing a state to advance its own democratic features. The empirical record supports the claim that military interventions result in non-constitutional regime changes in the participating states, and are most pronounced in the states that lose a military engagement. What we are not certain of is whether or not military intervention serves as a successful foreign policy tool to bring about democracy in a previously non-democratic political system. The research is ambiguous on this conclusion.

This study does *not* definitively resolve the debate on aggressive democracy promotion. However, it does add the discussion by highlighting two important pieces of information. First, the consequence of regime transformation that results from military intervention seems to be

tangential, meaning that it is an outcome beyond the control of the initiating state. If regime transformation is a tangential outcome, then military intervention is not an optimal tool for democratization. Second, the direct outcome of military intervention appears to be (at this point) a weakened state rather than a democratized state. If the underlying idea of aggressive democracy promotion is to promote a liberal grand strategy in order to enhance the benefits of the democratic peace, we might be better served by addressing the question, 'what states yield the better outcome for peace and stability in the international system: democracies or coherent states?' It seems if the answer to this question is the former, then aggressive democracy promotion may still have *limited utility* as a foreign policy tool, and more work is needed to further isolate those conditions where ADP works best. If, however, failed states and incoherent states are bigger threats to international peace and stability, then aggressive democracy promotion seems to run contrary to that goal, and should be abandoned as a foreign policy tool. At this point, further work is needed to isolate the impact of military intervention on democratization.

Notes:

1.      John M. Owen, IV. "The Foreign Imposition of Domestic Institutions." *International Organization*. 2002, 56(2): 375—409.

2.      William R. Thompson. "Consequences of War." *International Interactions*. 1993, 19(1-2): 125—147.

3.      Jeffrey Pickering and Emizet F. Kisangani. "Political, Economic, and Social Consequences of Foreign Military Intervention." *Political Research Quarterly*. 2006, 59(3): 363—376.; Mark Peceny. "Forcing them to be Free." *Political Research Quarterly*. 1999, 52(3):

549—582.; Margaret G. Hermann and Charles W. Kegley, Jr. "The U.S. use of military intervention to promote democracy: Evaluating the record." *International Interactions*. 1998, 24(2): 91—114.

4.      Andrew J. Enterline and J. Michael Greig. "Perfect Storms?: Political instability in imposed polities and the futures of Iraq and Afghanistan." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 2008, 52(6): 880—915.; Scott Walker and Frederic D. Pearson. "Should we really "Force Them to be Free?": An empirical examination of Peceny's Liberalizing Intervention Thesis." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. 2007, 24(1): 37—53.; John A. Tures. "Operation Exporting Freedom: The Quest for Democratization via United States Military Operations." *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*. 2005: 97—111.; James Meernik. "United States Military Intervention and the Promotion of Democracy." *Journal of Peace Research*. 1996, 33(4): 391—402.

5.      Scott Gates, Håvard Hegre, Mark P. Jones, and Håvard Strand. "Institutional Inconsistency and Political Instability: Polity Duration, 1800—2000." *American Journal of Political Science*. 2006, 50(4): 893—908.

6.      Keith Jaggers and Ted Robert Gurr. "Tracking Democracy's Third Wave with the Polity III Data." *Journal of Peace Research*. 1995, 32(4): 469—482.

7.      Gates, Hegre, Jones and Strand.  "Institutional Instability", 895.

8.      Nils Petter Gleditsch, Lene Siljeholm Christiansen, and Håvard Hegre. "Democratic Jihad? Military Intervention and Democracy." Paper presented at the 45th Annual Convention of the *International Studies Asscociation* (March 2004).

9.      U.S. Department of State. *United States Strategic Plan for International Affairs*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government).

10.     Owen, "Foreign Imposition of Domestic Institutions".

11.     Ibid.

12.     Nigel Lo, Barry Hashimoto, and Dan Reiter. "Ensuring Peace: Foreign Imposed Regime Change and postwar Peace Duration, 1914—2001." *International Organization*. 2008,  62: 717—736.

13. John F. Lugard. "Principles of Native Administration." In R.O. Collins, J.M. Burns, and E.K. Ching, eds. *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa, 3$^{rd}$ ed.* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner Publishers): 105—120.

14.     M.D. Lewis. "One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The Assimilation Theory in French Colonial Policy." In R.O. Collins, J.M. Burns, and E.K. Ching., eds. *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa 3$^{rd}$ ed.* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner Publishers): 140—153.

15.     G. John Ikenberry. "America's Liberal Grand Strategy: Democracy and National Security in the Post-war Era."  In Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry, and Takashi Inoguchi., eds. *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts.* (Oxford, UK; Oxford University Press): 103—126.

16.     Enterline and Greig, "Perfect Storms."

17.     Transcript of Clinton's Address. (January 26, 1994) *New York Times*. A17.

18.     Center for Democracy and Governance. *Democracy and Governance: A Conceptual Framework*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Agency for International Development).

19.     Jon C. Pevehouse. "Democracy from the Outside-In?: International Organizations and Democratization." *International Organization*. 2002, 56(3): 515—549.

20.     Samuel P. Huntington. "Will More Countries become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly*. 1994, 99(2): 193—218.

21.    Jeffrey Pickering and Mark Peceny. "Forging Democracy at Gunpoint." *International Studies Quarterly*. 2006, 50: 539—559.; Bruce Russet. "Bushwhacking the Democratic Peace." *International Studies Perspectives*. 2005, 6(4): 395—408.

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23.    Graham T. Allison and Robert P. Beschel. "Can the United States Promote Democracy?" *Political Science Quarterly*. 1992, 107(1): 81—98.

24.    Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?"

25.    Enterline and Greig, "Perfect Storms", 881.

26.    Thompson, "Consequences of War", 125.

27.    Peceny, "Forcing them to be Free", 550.

28.    C. Caan and B.C. Degrasse. *Stabilization and Reconstruction*. (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace), retrieved on September 20, 2007. Available url: http://usip.org/stabilization.

29.    Hermann and Kegley, "The U.S. use of Military Intervention", 108.

30.    Hermann and Kegley, "The U.S. use of Military Intervention", 94; Peceny, "Forcing them to be Free", 559; Tures, "Operation Exporting Freedom", 98—99.

31.    Pickering and Kisangani, "Consequences of Foreign Military Intervention", 368.

32.    Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 7.

33.    Jagger and Gurr, "Tracking Democracies Third Wave", 470.

34.     Shawn Treier and Simon Jackman. "Democracy as a Latent Variable." *American Journal of Political Science*. 2008, 52(1): 201—217.

35.     Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder. "Democratization and the Danger of War." *International Security*. 1995, 20(1): 5—38.

36.     Thompson, "Consequences of War", 132.

37.     Emizet F. Kisangani and Jeffrey Pickering. *International Military Intervention, 1989-2005*. (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research) [Computer File] doi:10.3886/ICPSR 1282; Frederick S. Pearson and Robert A. Baumann. *International Military Intervention, 1946-1988*. (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research). [Computer File] Data Collection 6035.

38.     Pearson and Baumann, *International Military Intervention*.

39.     Pickering and Kisangani, "Consequences of Military Intervention", 367; Peceny, "Forcing them to be Free", 563.

40.     Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jaggers. *Polity VI Project; Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2008*. (Fairfax, VA; Center for Systemic Peace). [Computer File] available url: http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm.

41.     It is not possible to positively assert that public statements on democratization truly underlie any military intervention. Other motivations may, and likely do exist, and we cannot dismiss the reality that democratization goals are mere rationalizations or pretexts for the military intervention. However, democratization is a well established goal for the United States, and other major democracies and international organizations. Therefore, this analysis adopts the same rationalization as Meernik (1996) to assess if democratization is hindered or helped in cases where democratization is clearly articulated as a goal of the military intervention (p. 394).

42.     In the Polity IVd dataset there are a range of numbers used to represent states in various

stages of political transformation including interregnums or anarchy (-77), transition (-88), or

outside interventions (-66). Such scores fall well outside the normal -10 to +10 range of the

polity scale. For purposes of this study all such codings are treated as missing cases. This step

does violate the norms of other studies, where -66 is treated as missing, while -77 is coded as

zero on the polity scale, and -88 is transformed into an average of the pre and post intervention

polity score (see, Hermann and Kegley, 1998; Peceny, 1999; Pickering and Peceny, 2006 for

examples). The logic for our decision is that -77 represents failed states, which is captured by the

MAGFAIL variable, and the transformation of -88 into a pre/post average does not really capture

the nature of what is taking place during a transition, the average can actually misrepresent what

is taking place in the target state at the time of the transition.

43.     Pickering and Peceny, "Forging Democracy at Gunpoint", 544.

44.     Treier and Jackman, "Democracy as a Latent Variable", 203.

45.     James Raymond Vreeland. "The Effect of Political Regime on Civil War: Unpacking

Anocracy." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 2008, 52(3): 401—425.

46.     Treier and Jackman, "Democracy as a Latent Variable", 204

47.     The coding convention adopted here replicates the scheme adopted by Meernik (1996)

with a couple of caveats. First, the period of observation in the present study is one-year pre-

intervention, one-year post-intervention, and five years post-intervention for each target state.

Meernik's study observed target states 3-years pre-intervention and 3-years post-intervention.

Second, Meernik's study focused on cases of U.S. intervention. This study incorporates all cases

of established democracies and international organizations, providing for broader and more comprehensive analysis.

48.   Person and Baumann, *International Military Intervention*.

49.   Pickering and Peceny, "Forging Democracy at Gunpoint", 547; Bruce Russett. "Bushwhacking the Democratic Peace." *International Studies Perspectives*. 2005, 6(4): 395— 408.

50.   Monty G. Marshall, Ted Robert Gurr, and Barbara Harff. *PTIF-State failure Problem Set: Internal Wars and Failures of Governance, 1955-2008*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management [CIDCM]). [Computer File]. Available url:

http://systemicpeace.org/inscr/PITFStateFailureCodebook2008.pdf.

51.   One concern is that state failure may be an intervening variable related to military intervention. As such, using this variable runs the risk of multicollinearity. However, a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between military intervention and state failure suggests no correlation (-.0536) making it safe to use the state failure variable as a distinct variable.
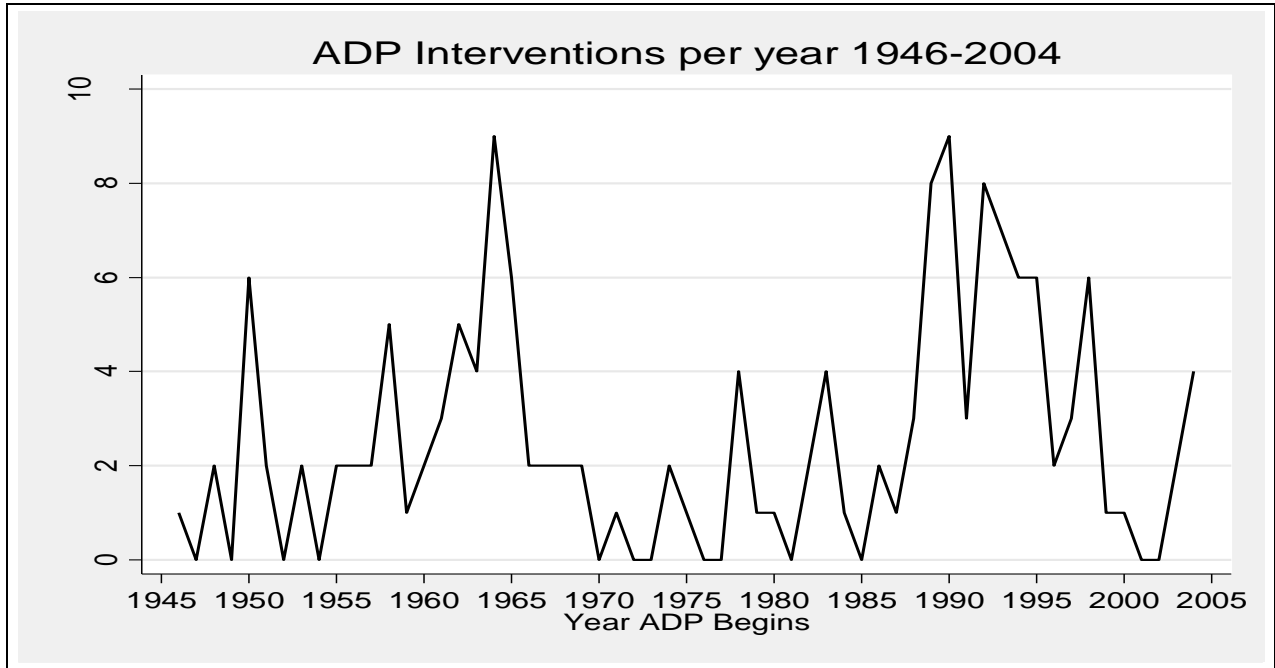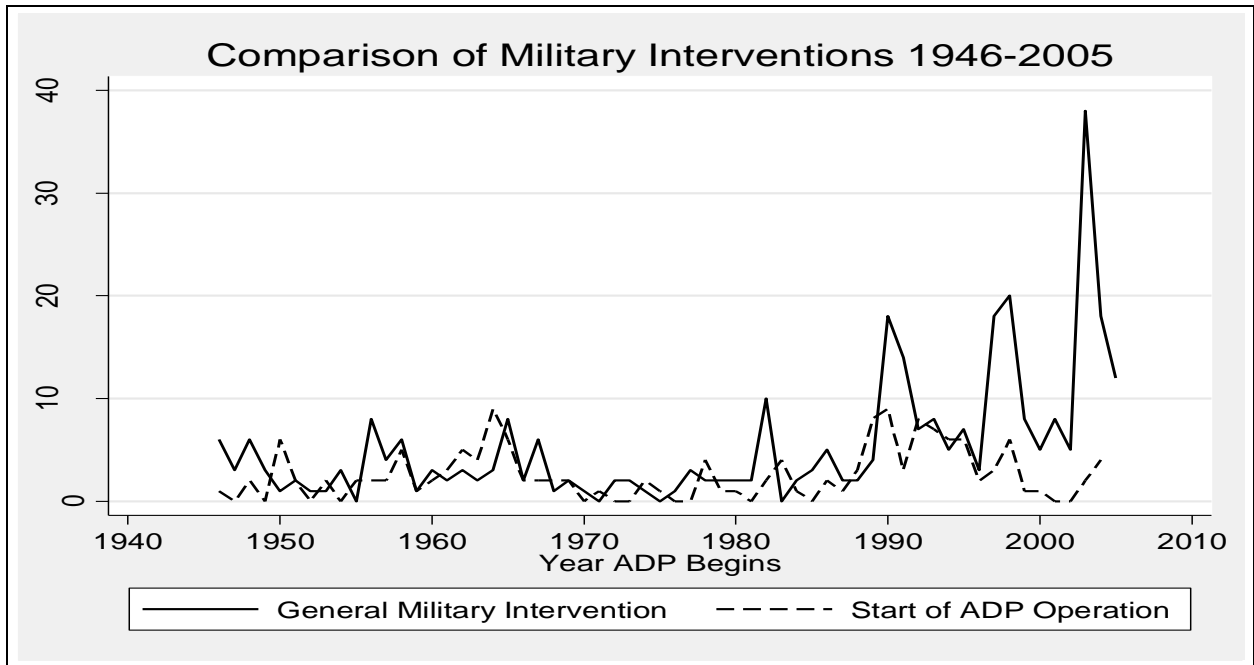
# Figures

Figure 1:



Figure 2:

**Table 1: Changes to Target State's Polity: Aggressive Democracy Promotion**

| Target State's Regime Type | 1yr Pre-Intervention | 1yr Post-Intervention | | 5yr Post-Intervention | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Democracy | 17 | 22 | | 29 | |
| Anocracy | 63 | 59 | | 43 | |
| Autocracy | 64 | 61 | | 63 | |
| | | | | | |
| **Total Shift Post-Intervention** | | | | | |
| States with a Positive Change | | 16 | (11%) | 23 | (17%) |
| States with No Change | | 113 | (80%) | 97 | (72%) |
| States with Negative Change | | 13 | (9%) | 15 | (11%) |

**Table 2: Changes to Target State's Polity: General Military Intervention**

| Target State's Regime Type | 1yr Pre-Intervention | 1yr Post-Intervention | | 5yr Post-Intervention | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Democracy | 54 | 63 | | 51 | |
| Anocracy | 111 | 119 | | 92 | |
| Autocracy | 133 | 94 | | 87 | |
| | | | | | |
| **Total Shift Post-Intervention** | | | | | |
| States with a Positive Change | | 44 | (16%) | 32 | (14%) |
| States with No Change | | 215 | (78%) | 177 | (77%) |
| States with Negative Change | | 17 | (6%) | 21 | (9%) |

Table 3: Analysis of Aggressive Democracy Promotion and Polity Shift in Target States

| Model | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|
| | One Year Post-Intervention | Five Years Post-Intervention |
| Democratic Intervention | .128411 (.1559234) | .1772142 (.1426326) |
| Support for Government | -.5833756 (.1555856)*** | -.44735711 (.13971)*** |
| Previous Polity Category | -1.03649 (.1327253)*** | -.9476298 (.1185485)*** |
| History of Colonization | .0352271 (.1835448) | -.1374055 (.1713346) |
| Democratic History | .8881421 (.1773213)*** | .6553958 (.1637662)*** |
| Magnitude of State Failure | .0486019 (.0436964) | -.023786 (.0428576) |
| Population | 1.98e-10 (5.68e-10) | -3.85e-10 (4.80e-10) |
| GDP | 1.93e-13 (7.82e-13) | -3.82e-13 (6.86e-13) |
| Observations | 423 | 406 |
| LR $X^2$ (8) | 89.29*** | 92.36*** |
| Pseudo R$^2$ | .1633 | .1428 |

Standard Errors in parenthesis

*significant at the .10 level, **significant at the .05 level, ***significant at the .01 level.